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— An Essay —
On Dysmenorrhœa,
Respectfully Submitted
To the Faculty
Of the
Homœopathic Medical College
Of
Pennsylvania,
On the
Thirty-first Day
Of January,
Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-four,
By
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Of Salem
New Jersey.

Jan. 31st 1854.

It is a painful sensation
of a pain of internal constriction that
is caused by pain more or less severe,
in either the external or internal
the monthly discharge from the uterus,
which may be very profuse or
about the usual amount, or greatly
diminished in quantity so much
so as to constitute but a poor
efflux for a "shower" even this scanty
efflux may be completely suppressed
for a longer or shorter time, and
again make its appearance in
a greater or less extent only to be
re-suppressed.

The difficulty may be re-
peated but once or very frequently
happening it returns at stated times.

Difficult or painful menstruation is a form of abnormal menstruation. That is known by pain more or less severe, in either the secretion or emission of the monthly discharge from the uterus, which may be, very profuse, of about the usual amount, or greatly diminished in quantity; so much so as to constitute but a poor apology for a "show"; even this scanty emission may be completely suppressed for a longer or shorter time, and again make its appearance for a greater or less extent, only to be re-suppressed.

The difficulty may be experienced but once, more frequently however it returns at several men-

-stual periods, and sometimes it lasts for many years.

The pain and constitutional symptoms differ widely in different individuals, and also in the same individuals under different circumstances.

The attendant symptoms of dysmenorrhœa, are in general, bearing down pains, in the region of the uterus, similar to labor pains, incessant aching in the lumbar region, pelvis, and extremities; accelerated action of the heart, cheeks flushed, headache, pains in the abdomen of a pressing cutting character, spasmodic pains in the gastric region, irritability with oppression of the chest, scanty elimina-

-tion of non-coagulable blood containing lymph membranous shreds or clots of dark colored blood.

This abnormal condition of the catamenia will, probably in all cases be found dependent on or resulting from one or more of the following causes. viz. Neuralgia, Inflammation or Mechanical obstruction.

Neuralgia of the uterus may be incident to all ages, but certainly is most common after the age of thirty years, and is most likely to occur in those who have never borne children. It is likewise almost exclusively confined to those females who are of a thin delicate habit with whom the nervous temperament

predominates. The menses are attended with all the concomitant characteristics of neuralgia.

Dr. Oberle in his practice says that it is ~~very~~ frequently dependant on a rheumatic condition of the Uterus.

In a case that occurred in his practice, the connection between rheumatism and dysmenorrhoea he concludes was strikingly illustrated.

The patient of an irritable and sanguinous habit, was subject to rheumatic pains in the left, and sometimes in the right ankle joint, which often continued for several weeks.

For more than five years she observed that whenever she felt the pain in the joint at the menstrual period, she menstruated with little

or no difficulty; but when the period returned while the ankle was free from pain, she invariably suffered excruciatingly during the very sparring and transient flow of the menses.

The most usual cause of dysmenorrhoea is an inflammatory condition of the uterus or its appendages; and will almost invariably be found attacking those who are plethoric and fanciful, who indulge in the luxuries of the table, such as Coffee, wines, Cordials, &c. and who are fond of Theatrical exhibitions & performances, spending the day in the warm, badly ventilated parks, perusing the light literature of the day which, at best, is only —

calculated to pervert the intellect, heat the imagination, and set on fire the baser passions of their nature.

Really it is not surprising that the uterine functions should become impaired, when we consider that the iron laws of fashion, the customs of the times impose such enormous burdens on the delicate female particularly in what is known in common parlance as refined society, or forsooth among the aristocracy especially of large cities.

^{the} The fond Mother, desiring that her promising daughter be reared in accordance with the requisitions of elegance and symmetry, (which is in fact the most unreal that could be imagined)

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with a chest distorted. To suit precisely
this abominable code of fashions,
instead of those beautiful proportions
which an all-wise Creator conferred upon
her, incarcerates her in buckram
and corset boards, pressing the viscera
of the abdomen rudely down upon
the pelvic viscera, crowding them into
half the space Providence designed
that they should occupy, or literally
pressing them out of their neat, though
sufficiently spacious habitation;
and the thoracic viscera cramped
up to such a degree that the respi-
ratory organs are absolutely deranged
beyond the possibility of recovery;
all this must be endured in order to form
a wasp-like waste to meet the requirements

of a so-called gentility.

Compared with these requisitions the organs of respiration, digestion and generation are not deemed worthy of consideration in perfecting this straight-jacket system.

It is exceedingly strange that no more of these unfortunate creatures are compelled to wear a shait-jacket, under somewhat different circumstances and for other purposes.

Our heavenly Father made the human body of exactly the proper proportions for the healthful exercise of all its functions, and in conformity with the laws of nature the untutored and savage Mother, guided as it were by instincts leaves these functions to

their unmolested action, and consequent-
 -ly is a total stranger to all the
 functional derangements of the genital or-
 -gans, and bears her offspring com-
 -paratively free from pain: while
 the prudent civilized Mother confounds
 as it were the designs of her Creator
 by artificial means, and makes of
 her daughter an artificial thing, looked
 upon as a specimen of elegant
 gentility: whose functions are des-
 -tined to incessant derangements,
 and obnoxious to an innumerable
 host of diseases. Such as amenorrhoea,
 dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia, leucorrhoea,
 chlorosis, Constipation, Consumption, and
 organic disease of the heart, with all their
 attendant evils; to displacements of the

wombs and to the propagation of her species with excruciating agony, or even death itself.

The innocent maid being thus cheated out of her normal proportions, by a mother devoted to fashion, rather than the permanent welfare of her daughter, it is thought advisable to consummate her education by shutting her up within the walls of a boarding-school: here she must have her mind taxed to the utmost with all the branches of an ordinary English education, in addition to these she must study Greek, Latin, German, & French, painting, drawing, Music and dancing. But must reject wit, mirth and physical

exercise in the open air as something beneath her dignity, and fit only for those who may be less fortunate and more in humbler spheres.

Now her education is finished, her form, beautifully unnatural, her countenance magnificently pale and deathlike. Thus she is prepared for the stern duties and responsibilities of real life in a bustling world of fashions, and for her share of the pain and anguish consequent upon such a continuous course of folly.

Another cause of dysmenorrhoea will be found to be Mechanical obstruction, either congenital or otherwise, of the vagina or neck of the womb.

The usual states or conditions under which the mechanical class of causes will be found are, abnormal local positions of the organs such as, retroflexion, ante flexion, retroversion, anteversion and polypus uteri; and congenital constriction of the neck of the womb, diminutive or imperforate os ~~tincae~~, constriction of the vagina and an imperforate hymen.

Whether the diminution of narrowing of the caliber be congenital or the result of inflammation Churchill thinks it difficult to determine, but that they do exist is incontrovertible.

The major part of this variety of causes is doubtless traceable directly or indirectly to either neuralgia or rheumatism, for their real source or origin,

For instance the fibrous structure or the lining or mucous membrane of the neck of the womb taking on violent inflammation, might thereby become crisped or thickened and result in a material diminution of the calibre of the organ.

The vagina also may be constricted by means of indurations or scars, resulting from inflammation and sloughing, or the passage may be almost if not entirely obliterated from adhesion of its walls.

An imperforate hymen is of course a congenital malformation, as also occlusion of the mouth of the womb may be.

We therefore conclude that dysmenorrhoea as a consequence of mechanical obstruction, cannot in all

Cases be cured by mechanical means, such as dilating with the bougie or perforating or cutting, because the constriction may be caused and sustained by inflammation, which must be subdued by homoeopathic medicinal agents, if nature proves to be inadequate to the task of throwing it off herself.

Dr. McCutosh gave the results of twenty-seven cases of dysmenorrhoea caused directly by mechanical obstruction of the os uteri, that came into his hands twenty-four of which he says were cured by the introduction of bougies.

There being no data in his cases from which to prove that the menses were suppressed or retained as they must have

been if the caliber had been so small
 as barely to admit, as he said, ^{of the introduct} of a bristle,
 the probability is that, the majority
 of the twenty-four cases he reported
 as cured had simply the ob-
 striction removed, and that he,
 properly speaking, did not intend
 to convey the idea that the
 dilatation of the os uteri had
 remedied so great a proportion
 of cases. For want of such evidence
 in the matter, and considering
 that several other authors refer to
 cases treated by themselves, where
 the constriction was entirely removed
 while the dismenorrhoea remained
 the same, ~~except~~ in one or two cases,
 we conclude that painful menstruation

depends upon other causes, in the most of this class of cases, notwithstanding they exist in connection with a constricted condition of the calibre.

Causes of dysmenorrhoea.

It is somewhat difficult to give, in all cases, the cause of dysmenorrhoea; but the symptoms will usually indicate some one of the pathological conditions we have already enumerated.

Exposure to cold and wet, miscarriages, and premature confinement, are among the principal exciting causes. It will generally be found that dysmenorrhoea discovers itself through one or more of the causes enumerated, notwithstanding it may be produced by a combination of causes.

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Diagnosis.

The diagnosis of dysmenorrhoea in most cases is easily made out, from the fact that the symptoms of the functional derangement are well defined.

In the inflammatory varieties the condition of the uterus may easily be made out by examinations with the speculum and finger, through the vagina and rectum.

In cases of congestion and distension of the uterus, an accurate diagnosis will be absolutely necessary, from the fact that the patient's character may be ruined by a little ignorance or inadvertency on the part of the Medical attendant.

by mistake the Membrane thrown
 off in spurious abortion for the
 true decidua would be an un-
 pardonable blunder, and would
Justly blast the reputation of
 the practitioner, if by any means
 it should be discovered, and made
 public. In reference to this subject
 Dr. Montgomery says, "The substance
 expelled in this disease will be found
 to be deficient in several of the properties
 of the true decidua; for although produced
 in the uterus by an action analogous
 to that by which it prepares the decidual
 rudamentum for the reception and
 support of the ovum, it differs there-
 -from in two essential points; first,
 that it is a morbid product; and

Secondly, that not being intended,
 like the true decidua, to become an
 organ, or at least a medium of
 nutrition for the ovum, it is not
 furnished with a structure such as
 would only be required for the per-
 -formance of such an office; hence,
 it is thin, flimsy, and very unsub-
 -stantial in its texture; of dirty-white
 color, or yellowish appearance when
 slightly agitated in water, devoid
 of the soft, rich, pulpy appearance,
 deep vascular color, and numerous
 foramina for the reception of the nu-
 -trient vessels from the uterus, which
 are always so distinctly observable
 in the true decidua, which however in
 one point it resembles, having its

inner surface smooth, and the outer unequal, but of a ragged and shaggy appearance, unlike that of the healthy uterine decidua, and it is, moreover, entirely destitute of the little cotyledonary sacculi, already described as an essential character in the latter structure.

In texture, it more nearly resembles that of the reflexa than any other structure; but no trace of the transparent membrane of the ovum can be discovered within, or attached to it. And should it happen to come away entire, in the form of a hollow triangular bag, we never find within it a duplicature of itself, forming an inner pouch or reflex layer, as in the case of natural decidual envelopes of the ovum."

Prognosis.

The prognosis is favorable, notwithstanding they may be severe and tedious, in all cases of the neuralgic form, and likewise those that are the result of a gouty or rheumatic condition of the system.

In cases of mechanical obstruction, as for instance abnormal local positions or displacements of the uterus, constriction, Coarctation &c. it will depend upon the practicability or non-practicability of an operation, in view of the fact that it may result in peritoneal inflammation, where it is the result of anteversion and retroversion it is easily relieved, and the termination will be satisfactory.

If the case depend for its existence upon inflammation, it will give way to the appropriate homeopathic remedies, more or less readily, according to the degree and extent of the inflammation.

Treatment.

We have already referred to the appropriate treatment for mechanical obstruction. If there should be an undue degree of sensitiveness or soreness after, and consequent upon the operations, an application of dilute tincture of arnica or calendula, or the internal administration of arnica will prevent farther trouble. The cases resulting from neuralgia and inflammation, have frequently been relieved by sexual intercourse and giving birth to children; and the

cessation of the menses, at the approach of advanced life, familiarly known as the "turn of life" of necessity must arrest this form of difficulty. Under all circumstances those afflicted with dysmenorrhoea should avoid stimulants, highly seasoned food, and undue exposure to extremes of heat and cold, and observe regularity in all things, and take plenty of exercise in the open air.

The most appropriate medicinal agents, recommended in dysmenorrhoea are to be found in the following catalogue, viz.
 Aconite, Carbonate of ammonia, Belladonna, Bryonia,
 Carbonate of Lime, Chamomilla, Coffee, Crocus, Cocculus,
 Graphites, Ignatia, Nux Vomica, Phosphorus, Platina,
 Pulsatilla, Rcale, Sassa, Sulphur —————

In neuralgic cases the remedies are,

Amon. card. Where there is pain in the loins before or during the catamenia, with pressure on the uterus, drawing in the back, and a disposition to occupy the reclining posture,

Belladonna. Where there is congestive enlargement of the uterus, prolapsus uteri, menstrual spasms, just before the catamenia, with drawing labor-like pains from the loins, with pressing down towards ^{the} genitals, Catamenia too copious and too early, & too pale, colic preceding the catamenia, with great fatigue, loss of appetite, and confused sights or if the catamenia are accompanied by nocturnal perspiration on the chest with frequent yawning, shivering, with pre-cordial anxiety. Spasmodic pains in the sacrum and back. numbness of the legs

when seated, and pressure on the rectum; or if there be congestion in the head or chest. Heat in the head, with pulsative pain, redness, and fulness of the face. —

Chamomilla. — Is especially indicated if there be sympathetic swelling of the breasts, catamenia suppressed; with pressive pains in the pit of the stomach and abdomen, towards the genitals, as if from labor pains, colic before and during the menses.

Cocculus. — Is applicable in females of a mild plethoric or bilious temperament, who are unmarried, or have not borne children, menstrual colic, with cramps in the uterus, premature and painful catamenia, with sanious leucorrhoea in the interval, Cocculus will be peculiarly applicable if the symptoms just enumerated are aggravated from sleep, conversa-

-tion, eating, and drinking especially coffee.
Coffee. - If there be violent agitation, tears,
 cries, tossing, and discouragement, during the
 paroxysms of pain.

Ignatia. In sensitive females of a nervous
 temperament; especially if the menses occur
 too early and too profuse, with cramp-like
 and compressive pains in the region of the
 uterus, heat, heaviness, and pain in the
 head, colic, and constrictive pains, anxiety,
 palpitation of the heart, and sighing respira-
 -tion, with sadness and concealed sorrow, it
 is also useful if pressure and lying on the
 back mitigate the pain, or if there is a
 purulent and corrosive leucorrhoea.

Nux vomica. - Catamenia too profuse, prema-
 -ture, and of too long duration, with pressive
 pains in the hypogastrium, and spasms in the uterus.

Nausea with faintness, especially in the
 morning; rheumatic pains in the limbs,
 great fatigue; pain in the loins, as if
 bruised; constipation with sensation
 of contraction in the anus; colic,
 with cramp-like pains in a full
 distended abdomen; ineffectual
 desire to urinate, with burning pain
 in the neck of the bladder; heav-
 iness, pressure and sensation of ex-
 pansion in the head, with vertigo,
 mix is especially indicated if the above
 symptoms occur in females of a lively,
 choleric or sanguineous temperament
 with black eyes, and hair, or a bil-
 ious, dry, and meagre, or lymphatic
 feeble and exhausted constitution.
Crampites. - Stagnation in the venæ portæ
 system, producing a full congested state

of the uterine vessels, particularly in young girls; rheumatic pains in the limbs with great weakness, edematous swelling of the feet and legs.

Inflammatory class of cases,

Aconite.— Inflammatory condition of the uterus or ovaries, with violent fever, dry and burning heat, violent thirst for cold drinks, redness and heat in the face; distension of the abdomen with tenderness to touch; rapid respiration, menses too abundant; smarting in the parts, or delirium on the appearance of the menses, and especially if the discharge be dark colored, or attended with spasms, or if it appears too late, is scanty, or entirely suppressed.

Belladonna.— Is an important remedy in persons of a lymphatic temperament, or

of a plethoric habit. Mild temperament, with blue eyes, light hair, delicate skin, and especially if there be a tendency to a scrophulous enlargement of the glands, Bryonia. - If the patient be of a nervous or dry, meagre, and bilious temperament. complexion dark, brown or black eyes and hair, irritability; with anxiety and inquietude; despair of being cured, congestion in the head or chest, with short cough, with frequent bleeding at the nose, acute, nervous, or rheumatic pains in the limbs during the catamenia, pressure and fullness in the epigastrium; coldness and frequent shivering; constipation. —

Amonia Carbonica. - Is peculiarly suited to scrophulous persons, of a sad, fearful humor, especially if the dysmenorrhœa is attended with swelling itching, and

burning, in the genital parts; or excori-
 -ation of the parts; or if the menses be
 premature and too copious, of a dark
 color, and acrid corrosive nature, or
 if there be colic and pain in the
 loins, during or immediately before the
 catamenia, with pressure in the uterus,
 cuttings, acute pullings in the back and
 in the genitals, with desire to lay down,

Calcaria Carbonica. - If the patient be
 of a plethoric or lymphatic constitution,
 with excessive dejection; great fatigue;
 pale yellow color of the face; or if
 there be congestion in the head, with
 dizziness and vertigo attended with
 melancholy, and a disposition to weep,
 easily frightened, discouragement and
 fear of death; aversion to labor; especially
 if the dysmenorrhoea be attended with too

copious and premature catamenia; or if the breast be swollen and painful with headache, colic and shivering before the Catamenia, or if there be cuttings in the abdomen, and cramp-like pains in the kidneys, with nausea during the catamenia; or if there be itching with inflammation and swelling of the uterus, or prolapsus uteri, with bearing down and an aching sensation in the vagina, particularly suited to scrophulous persons, it should not be given lower than the thirtieth attenuation, in a single dose, and that should be allowed to act without interruption.

Graphites. Is peculiarly adapted to cases of subacute inflammation of the ovaria, with leucorrhoea white and liquid like water before and after the catamenia.

Finis.

